Rome 14th July 1871

My dear Marie

As I always leave every thing to answer your very kind & interesting letters, so now yours of the 9th merits notice at once more particularly as I can give you a very good account of myself both as to my health & prospects

I am staying the summer in Rome as my secretaries have just lost their excellent mother have so much afflicted that they are gone for a change, one to Ancona the other to Naples so now that the great heat is come I am left up like Robinson Crusoe & doing for myself for another fortnight

My painting flourishes & so does my strength & as the summer always agrees with me

I may hope to get on well for awhile

Only think the house all shut for the heat, windows & blinds until the eve. yet I sits down to dinner in great comfort, every thing cooled, the wine the punit down myself, whilst outside I know it is like a furnace

all the Royal suites I got thro very - with the King's ball at the Capitol with the 3 palaces united was indeed splendid, but I accidently ran into the Majesty as he was ascending from the great saloon & I was turning up, spank I went against him & as he is fat & I am not at all thin there was a great explosion of breath - I at once began to apologize with the little breath I had left but the King had not enough breath to utter a word, but he gave me a most gracious smile

I now hope all my fears of my consulate are at an end – all my P.s assure me that the new com is a personal favour done for my life – more so as my elder Sec.y is made Vice Consul which gives me ease – that tho' Majesty's sign manual would not have been granted but to be permanent – But I had cause for fear as our ambassador was at Florence & without any Consul – he has just called on me but I was out – after all the bustle of Capitol coming, the review the banquets &c &c, old Rome has sunk down into its usual Summer Repose except that the Pope excommunicates (sends to the Devil) all who read the naughty newspapers, but Pasquin says that this Holiness is also excommunicated for as he also reads them he must be included –

My large house serves to give me a walk when I am idle about going